

10 February 2007

Ms Anne Jolly
The Competition Commission
Victoria House
Southampton Row
London WC1 4AD

Dear Ms Jolly,

Scottish Citylink Inquiry – Undertakings

With each pronouncement from the Commission my astonishment grows. If there were masses howling for the end of the joint venture I could understand. Instead, all we have is the initial referral from the Office of Fair Trading. The responses to your interim action were overwhelmingly in favour of the joint venture. The responses to your subsequent proposals have been 100% in favour of the continuation of the joint venture, and from a wide spectrum.

We are currently being invited to respond to the Commission's equivalent of "Have you stopped beating your wife yet?" As a variant you ask us to choose "Do you prefer to have the right arm or the left arm amputated?" To add insult to injury you ask the companies whom you wish to deprive of the element which is essential to the entire Scottish network to provide facilities for a supplanting operator and to bear expenses incurred in disputes. It has no doubt escaped your notice, but all these costs will eventually be borne by the inconvenienced passengers, through either fares or poorer service.

Competition is alive and well in Scotland. In the unlikely setting of the Glasgow-Largs route, instead of just Citylink we now have a total of three competing services – and running within minutes of each other. Is this the Commission's idea of integrated transport? My own impression is that Stagecoach/Citylink were doing an excellent job of providing coherent timetables before their legitimate activities were restrained.

Is there any real reason to doubt that the opportunity is there for another competitor to appear on the Saltire routes without any artificial restrictions being imposed on the incumbent operator?

Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to find the Transport and General Workers' Union expressing support for Stagecoach. But that has happened. It seems we are all out of step but oor Jock in London.

Even at this late stage it cannot be too late for you to reconsider and allow the joint venture to proceed to the benefit of passengers.

Yours sincerely,

Raymond Taylor

Rutherglen, Glasgow

